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S. Korean President Urges End to Isolation of North

South Said Strong Enough to Soften Policy

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Washington Post Foreign Service

SEOUL, July 1—President Roh Tae Woo, enunciating a major shift in policy, said today that South Korea will no longer seek to isolate communist North Korea, but will let the United States and other allies to begin integrate the North into the international community. "We must not isolate the North," he said in an interview. "We must encourage them to join the community of nations. We have changed this. We think that by encouraging them to be more open, we can have peace in this part of the world."

Roh's new posture toward the North reflects a deep and widespread yearning here for progress

toward reunification of the bitterly divided Korean peninsula, where a major war was fought in the early 1950s and which remains among the world's most dangerous points of East-West confrontation.

Roh's policy of integration rather than isolation would appear to call for a corresponding shift in U.S. policy toward North Korea. The United States takes its lead from South Korea in foreign policy. Roh's new attitude, say contact with North Korea, has blocked a terrorist

attack here in the week since he gathered his new era by accepting opposition demands for direct presidential elections, seven years after he won that election and four months after taking office. Roh appeared at ease with himself and his policies as he responded to questions in a sitting room of the Blue House, South Korea's equivalent of the White House.

See ROH, A1A, Col. 1

Roh Urges End to Isolation of N. Korea

ROH, From A1

Roh acknowledged that he is being criticized for his cautious style of leadership, which contrasts with the more forceful methods of his immediate predecessors. But the 57-year-old former general said he is prepared to be patient to permit the democratic process to take root and grow. "The fact that the man in power has not taken strong measures means the man in power is in a strong position," Roh said.

Since taking office, Roh has sought to involve many more people and institutions, both public and private, in the making of decisions that formerly would have been issued by the Blue House with a minimum of notice.

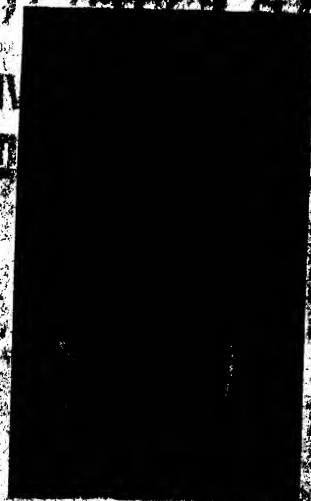
A 25-member advisory committee made up of private citizens is seeking to chart new priorities for the Korean economy. Televised public hearings are considering such previously taboo subjects as policy toward the North. The faction-ridden and fractious National Assembly, in which the ruling party lacks an absolute majority for the first time, is preparing to debate nearly every aspect of Korean life and to investigate the alleged scandals and repression of the previous administration.

Roh said the ferment is part of a drive for "self-sustaining power" on the part of Korean institutions, and that it would be destroyed if he were to assert executive authority and control as in the past, as some of his advisers recommend.

"If I follow that kind of advice, the clock will definitely be turned back, and we will return to the old days," he said. "I am determined not to do that." The country's two leading opposition leaders said in separate interviews, however, that Roh is moving much too slowly to shed the trappings of authoritarianism and redeem the promises of democratic reform he made this time last year.

"I cannot really give Roh Tae Woo a passing mark" on his performance over the past year, said Kim Dae Jung, leader of the largest opposition group in the National Assembly. Kim declared that "hard-line forces" within the ruling party are pressuring Roh to scuttle reforms.

Kim Young Sam, who leads the second largest opposition group, said, "I don't believe [Roh] has fulfilled his pledges honestly." He charged that more than 500 pris-



ROH TAE WOO

"we can have peace"

oners of conscience remain in jail and that television news is still manipulated by the government.

Acknowledging an increased degree of anti-American feeling here, Roh said part of the trouble is that many young people, who lack any memory of the 1950-1953 Korean War, blame the United States and the Soviet Union for dividing the peninsula and the Korean people between rival communist and capitalist regimes after World War II.

He said American economic pressure to open Korean markets is exacerbating public mistrust, and he particularly chided U.S. tobacco companies for "pushing too impatiently" to insist on sales here of American cigarettes. In recent days, church, consumer and farm groups have mounted protests against U.S. "dumping" of cancer-causing cigarettes here.

In general, though, Roh praised the United States, "our closest ally," for shedding the blood of its young men to defend South Korea in the war and aiding Korean development in later decades.

"I hope, and it is the hope of my people, to share the honor and glory of the Olympics and of the growth of this country with the United States," Roh said in a spontaneous tribute.

The emerging shift in diplomatic posture toward North Korea, which first surfaced in Roh's meeting with the South Korean press three days ago and was given greater definition today, is part of a broad realignment of official policies toward the communist adversary.

The justification for it was expressed by Roh in the interview and by other officials in recent days, rests on a belief that Soviet policy under Mikhail Gorbachev and Chinese policy under Deng Xiaoping and other leaders is easing the world's economic and political tensions in a manner that is bound to affect even the ill-bound and reclusive regime in North Korea.

The South Korean body politic, suddenly freed to discuss the subject of unification with the North, is eager to test its hope for improved relations, a hope undeterred by the absence, so far, of any evidence of change from Pyongyang.

The English-language Korea Times reported tonight that the Education Ministry is revising elementary and secondary school textbooks to reduce hostile images of North Korea and promote understanding instead. And the government is drafting several proposals to the North for exchanges of students and other groups, according to Minister of Reunification Lee Hong Koo.

On the economic front, said Lee, "it is just absurd that we have to buy minerals from South Africa or Australia that we could buy from North Korea."

Kim Woo Choong, chairman of the Daewoo Group, one of South Korea's largest conglomerates, said "the time is coming" when South Korean business could build factories in North Korea. "I'd like to go first," said Kim, whose firm has recently begun production of refrigerators in China.

The United States has resisted many North Korean overtures for contacts. Bowing to past South Korean sensitivity and frequent protests, Washington has only rarely granted visas even to scholars and other unofficial persons from North Korea who wish to visit the United States.

Asked whether he will cease the protests against such North Korean visits to the United States, Roh cautioned against "changing everything too quickly."

"But our basic policy line is clear," he added. "We will approach the North Koreans on more friendly terms, and we would like our friends to help us draw them out into the international community."

Reunification Minister Lee said the question of Seoul's policy on North Korean visits to the United States is under "very serious" review.